

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY USSR
SUBJECT Kuntsevo Chrome Leather Factory

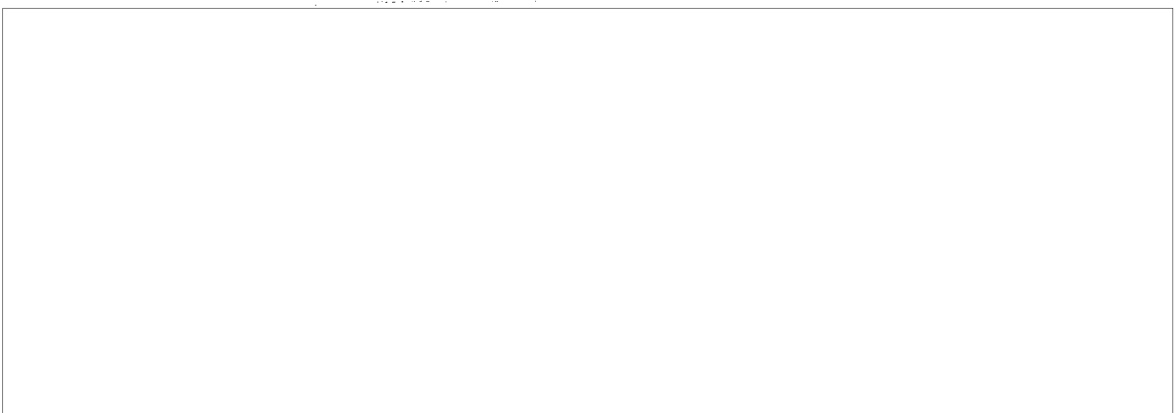
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50X1 1. The Kuntsevo Chrome Leather Factory (Kuntsevskiy Khromovyy Kozhevennyy Zavod) was subordinate to the Main Administration of Leather Processing Industry, a part of the Ministry of Light Industry (Moscow). In June 1949, the Minister of Light Industry was Kosvein: [redacted] 50X1

[redacted] The Main Administration of Leather Processing Industry directed all leather production and [redacted] 50X1

[redacted] all leather factories in the USSR were under the direction of this agency. The Director (usually referred to as "Glavk") of the Main Administration planned the annual leather production and assigned production norms (quotas) to individual leather processing factories. He also was responsible for securing raw materials for leather factories. Within the ministry there was an agency called the All-Union Leather Supply Bureau, (Soyuzkozhsnab) which was charged with securing required quantities of raw skins and hides for national consumption. On the basis of production capacities and the quality of leather processed by the individual leather factories, all large footwear and leather goods factories in the USSR were assigned definite leather processing factories from which they drew their allotments of leather. This plan was prepared each year by the Main Administration of Leather Processing Industry. Smaller footwear and leather goods factories, which are not assigned permanent suppliers, applied for their needs on an ad hoc basis to the Main Administration, which assigned the leather processing factory and the amount of leather to be supplied. Administrative personnel of the leather processing

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factories, sometimes used their personal contacts with other industries connected with the leather processing branch, to obtain raw hides, chemicals, and other materials. The usual procedure however, was to submit requirements to the Main Administration of Leather Processing Industry, which through the appropriate agencies within the ministry, regulated in which way and by which enterprises such orders were to be filled.

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2. The Kuntsevo Leather Factory, built between 1915 - 20, was located in the southwestern part of Marfino (four kilometers from the center of Kuntsevo) on the right bank of the Setun' River. The area of the plant, approximately 800 x 600 m (48 hectares), and almost in the form of a rectangle, extended from the southeast to the northwest. The terrain was flat and barren, although there were rows of trees planted around the workshops.

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3. [redacted] the Kuntsevo Leather Factory was manufacturing chrome, kid and patent leather in various colors. The average daily output of finished leather was approximately 150,000 square decimeters. Eighty to 85% of the output was chrome leather and practically all the rest was kid; the patent leather represented hardly more than one half per cent of the total output. Production costs per square decimeter at the factory were as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| (a) Chrome leather, black | two rubles |
| (b) Kid leather, black | three rubles |
| (c) Kid leather, white | five rubles |
| (d) Patent leather, black | eight rubles |

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[redacted] production prices were rather high. A pair of working shoes with rubber soles, manufactured in any of the large footwear factories, had a retail price of 50 rubles.

4. The main consumers of finished products from the Kuntsevo Leather Factory (as appointed by the Main Administration of Leather Processing Industry), were as follows:
- (a) Footwear Factory Parizhskaya Kommuna, Moscow.
 - (b) 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Model'naya Footwear Factories, all in Moscow.
 - (c) Footwear Factory Kapranov, Moscow
 - (d) Leather Goods Factory (Fabrika Kozhizdeliy), Moscow. This factory manufactured women's handbags, briefcases, wallets, etc.
 - (e) Footwear Workshop of the Communist Party Academy (Vysshey Partiyonoy Shkoly), Moscow.
 - (f) Footwear Workshop of the USSR Council of Ministers, Moscow.
 - (g) Footwear Combinat, Ministry of Armaments, Moscow.
 - (h) Footwear Workshop of the Leather Processing Industry Research Institute, Moscow. This was an experimental workshop where the entire manufacture of shoes and boots was fully mechanized.

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- (1) Various cooperative and "artel'" footwear workshops (Obuvnyye Masterskiye Mestnoy Promyshlennosti) throughout the country.

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the Kuntsevo Leather Factory was always able to fulfill the assigned production quotas and even to exceed them.

5. The leather processing methods used in the Kuntsevo Leather Factory were rather old-fashioned and even primitive. The equipment and machinery was prewar type and very often needed repair and replacement. Mongolian goat skins received through the Soyuzhozhsnab represented the main raw material used by the Kuntsevo Leather Factory.
6. The factory had the following workshops where leather was processed:
- (a) Liming Shop (Zoln'yy Tsekh). This shop was 15 x 25 m large. First stage processing of raw dried skins was done here. There were two wooden reservoirs six meters in diameter and two meters deep, (each with capacity for 400 skins), filled with a liquid compound whose main ingredients were lime and chemicals. The skins were soaked in these reservoirs from eight to ten hours, after which they were removed and put on special sloped tables where the hair was shaved off by special knives. The hair was collected and taken to the wool-drying room which was a part of the liming shop. There it was dried, sorted, packed and shipped to factories manufacturing felt for wall covering, carpeting, gauntlets, etc.
- (b) Tannery (Dubnoy Tsekh). This shop was 15 x 40 m large. After the hair was removed, the skins were taken to the tannery which was equipped with wooden vats for tanning and initial dyeing. There were eight vats, 1½ m in diameter and 1½ m deep. These vats were equipped inside with wooden propellers driven by a centrally located electro-motor. The purpose of these propellers was to keep the skins constantly moving in order to dye them evenly. The dyes used at this stage were dry powdered chemicals; they were not nitro-dyes. The skins remained in these vats for four hours and then were removed and taken to the drying room which was a part of the tannery. Here they were fastened to special wooden frames holding aluminum plates with many holes. On each side of the frames were several clamps, which were used to fasten the skins to the frames. Skins were put on both sides of each frame and then left to dry. The drying room was heated with hot air and the drying process usually did not take more than an hour. When the skins were dry, they were taken off frames and put on the two stretching (tyanul'naya) machines which were provided with mechanical clamps. The machine operators held the skin in their hands, and turning it around, let the clamps catch and stretch the skin on those sections which needed extending and straightening. The skins then went to the two glossing (loshchil'naya) machines in the tannery. The main part of this machine was composed of two rollers; the outer part was covered with very thin metal wires and short bristles in the form of a coarse brush. These machines cleaned the surface of the skins and took off all rough spots. Each skin went through the glossing machine at least once; skins with rough and uneven surfaces went through two or even three times. When this stage of processing was completed, the skins were sorted according to their quality. After that the chief of the patent leather shop (one room and three workers in the finishing shop) usually selected several of the best skins to be processed as patent leather.
- The poorest skins were separated and

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used for lining (podkladnochnaya) leather. The lining leather underwent the same processing as chrome leather, except for the dyeing. The remaining bulk of semi-processed skins, all of which had to be processed as chrome and kid leather, then was taken to the dyeing shop which was a part of the tannery. There were several dozen sloping tables on which the skins were fastened and dyed with nitro-dyes by the means of dyesprayers. The skins were left to dry on the tables; the drying process did not take more than a few minutes because the temperature in the dyeing shop was rather high and the dyes prepared on an alcohol basis dried very quickly. [] heard of any chemical by the name of catechol or pyrocatechol used in the leather processing industry.

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- (c) Finishing Shop (Otdelochnyy Tsekh). This shop was 40 x 15 m large. Dyed and dried skins were taken from the tannery to the finishing shop and individually put under a press, which was actually a large ironing machine with a polished ironing surface 1 x 0.75 m. This machine was equipped with two moving rollers which pulled the skin under the iron's pressure. Turning the skin around, this procedure was repeated several times, until the skin was completely ironed. The skin's ends then were cut off with large scissors (similar to sheep wool-cutting scissors), and the skins were taken to the measuring machine; there was only one such machine in the finishing shop. It was composed of two rollers and an electric area computer which gave the skin's surface in square decimeters. The normal size of a finished goat skin processed in the Kuntsevo Leather Factory was 100-110 square decimeters. After measuring, the size of each skin was stamped on its back and the skins then were sorted according to their quality. There were seven different grades of finished leather in the Kuntsevo Leather Factory. The quality of raw material, thickness, color, shine, neatness, etc were all considered at sorting. The better leather qualified as kid; the rest was called chrome leather. The assorted skins were then packed in rolls, usually 20 skins per roll. The workers usually marked the packed rolls indicating their future destination, eg, "Goszak" (State Order), "Par. Kom" (Parizhskaya Kommuna). Packed and prepared for shipment, leather was taken then to the stock room. []

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- (d) Stock Room. The stock room was 80 x 10 m. All leather taken to the stock room from the finishing shop was accompanied by documents in duplicate. One copy was for the factory accounting office and the other for the chief of stock. In compliance with a directive of the Ministry of Light Industry the Kuntsevo Leather Factory stock room had an emergency stock of 450,000 square decimeters of the best chrome leather which could be released only upon special orders from the minister. This was done on many occasions and the leather was shipped usually to the footwear factory "Parizhskaya Kommuna". The emergency stock was replenished as soon as possible.
- (e) Mechanical and Carpenter Shops. These shops were located in a building 80 x 10 m. Machinery and wooden equipment were repaired here and new wooden equipment was manufactured.
- (f) Raw Material Warehouse. The warehouse was located in a building 100 x 10 m. It contained the following stock: dyes, spare parts, lime, various chemicals, alcohol, ox blood (for softening

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raw skins), eggs (the white was used also for softening raw skins), lard (a processing not known to me), various solvents, acids, special dye in the form of large crystals held in metal containers and called "Khrompik", various salts, castor oil, etc. Except for lime, salts, superphosphates and sodium sulfide, which were used in liming shop, all other materials were used in the tannery.

- (g) Boiler and Electric Shop. The factory had its own boiler and electrical shops for heating the factory buildings and for repairing and maintaining the electric machinery. Electric current for the factory was received from the municipal power plant in Kuntsevo.
- (h) Laboratory. Raw skins, processed leather, alcohol and various chemicals used in Kuntsevo Leather Factory were analysed in this laboratory.
- (i) Garage. There were 12 ZIS 2½ ton trucks used for the factory.

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7. The Kuntsevo Leather Factory employed approximately 500 workers, mostly women and youngsters, who worked two eight hour shifts from 0800 to 1700 and from 1700 to 0200; there was one hour meal recess for each shift. [redacted] no German PWs or forced labor camp inmates ever worked in the factory. The factory operated six days a week; each shift worked 48 hours per week. No one worked Sundays. Workers were paid twice a month on a piece work basis. The monthly wage of a worker was approximately 700-800 rubles; foremen and qualified workers like dyers could earn up to 2000 rubles. The work in the factory, however, was very hard, especially in the liming shop where there was almost no machinery and much of the work had to be done by hand. Living conditions for workers were poor. The majority lived in the factory housing project which was composed of wooden, summer type barrack houses, dilapidated and extremely crowded. In the housing project there was a workers' mess, a club, and a small library with Communist literature and some Russian classics. As in every other factory in the USSR, there was heavy drinking by the workers after paydays.
8. The factory area was surrounded by a wooden fence two and one half meters high. There was one watch-tower in the southern corner of the factory grounds. Guard posts were located on the watch-tower and at the main gate 24 hours a day. The factory guard detachment had approximately 15 men.
9. The factory director was Nikolay Nikolayevich Shelestin. The Chief Engineer in charge of technical installations and manufacture of leather was Khokhlov.
10. Difficulties encountered in operation of the Kuntsevo Leather Factory were as follows:
- (a) A poor quality of dyes was used and often the processed leather delivered to footwear factories was returned because of its unstable color.
 - (b) There was a shortage of nitro-dyes due to insufficient domestic production in the USSR.
 - (c) Insufficient funds to pay for delivered raw materials and processing chemicals.

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11. The types of contracts handled by the Kuntsevo Leather Factory were as follows:

- (a) First priority: Orders for fulfilling military requirements. The consumer was Obuvnoy Combinat of the Ministry of Armaments. The monthly delivery quota to this combinat, however, never went over 100,000 square decimeters. The best available quality of black chrome leather was usually delivered.
- (b) Second priority: Orders for fulfilling requirements of footwear factories. The bulk of the Kuntsevo Leather Factory production went to this group of consumers. Footwear Factory Parizhaskaya Kommuna was the largest consumer.
- (c) Third priority: Orders for normal domestic consumption. This group of consumers, generally cooperative and "artel" footwear workshops, was allotted small quantities of low quality leather.

12. With regard to the over-all leather supply in the USSR, [redacted] the raw-skin and raw-hide supply for domestic consumption was sufficient. This "sufficient supply" however, should be considered in the light of high retail market prices of leather goods in the USSR, and the low purchasing power of the average Soviet citizen. If purchasing power were increased, there would not be a sufficient supply of leather raw materials in the Soviet Union. [redacted] don't know whether the USSR imports any hides from abroad.

13. [redacted] some experiments were made with kozein dyes replacing nitro-dyes. As a result, brown chrome leather of a very nice permanent color was produced [redacted]

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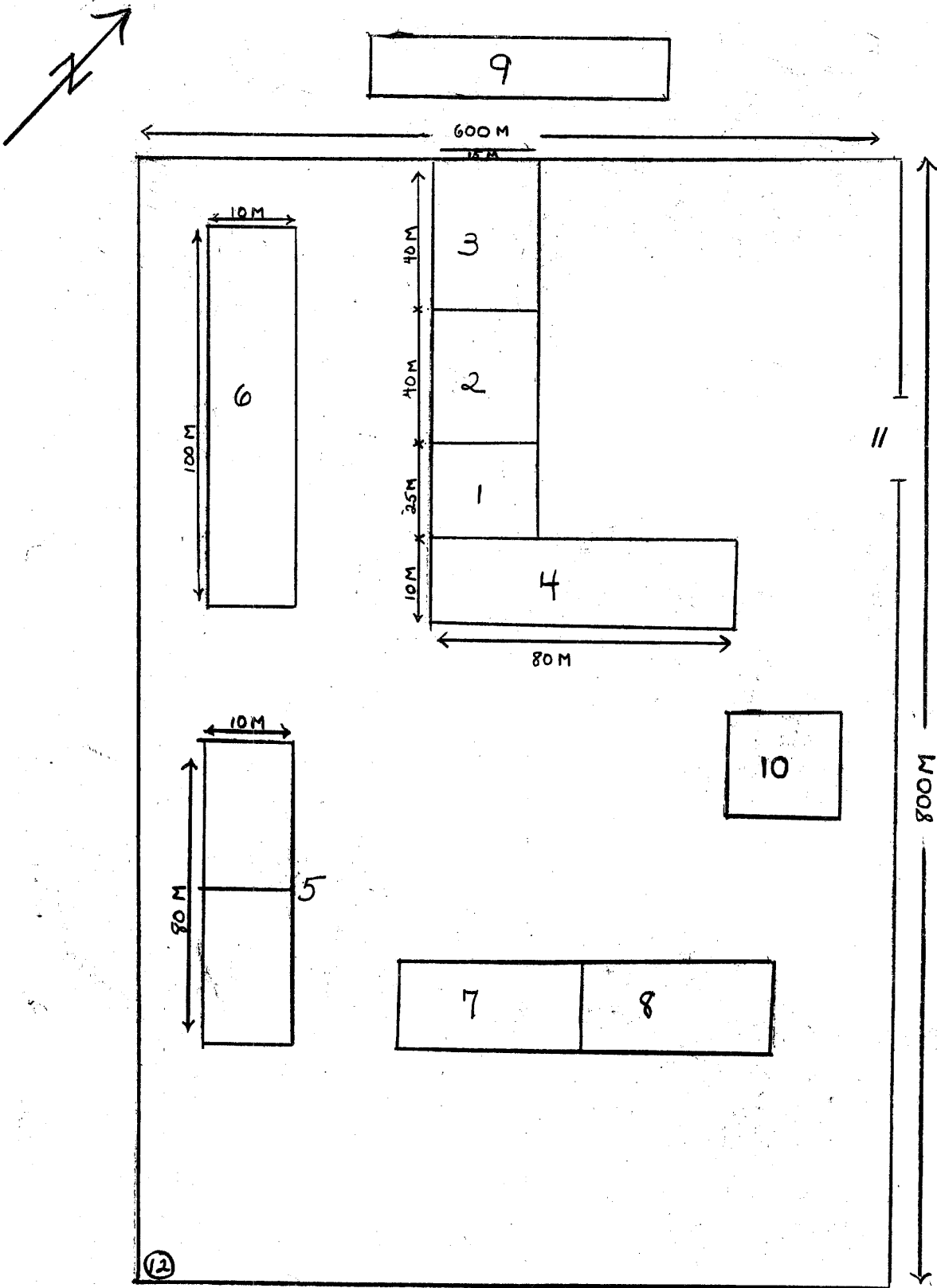
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Location Sketch
Kuntsevo Chrome Leather Factory (5544N-3726E)



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ENCLOSURE (A)

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Legend

1. Liming Shop
2. Tannery
3. Finishing Shop
4. Stock Room
5. Mechanical and Carpenter Shop
6. Raw Material Warehouse
7. Boiler Room and Electrical Shop
8. Laboratory
9. Garage
10. Guard House
11. Main Gate
12. Watch Tower

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